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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

19 March 1959

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NUCLEAR TEST TALKS

Moscow has attempted this week to keep discussion at Geneva focused primarily on the American draft article on duration. It probably believes that the Soviet position favoring a "permanent" and unconditional cessation of nuclear tests contrasts favorably with Western insistence on an escape clause based on the effectiveness of the control system.

Soviet chief delegate Tsarapkin has charged that the American draft proposal is "absurd," since it would make the entire fate of the treaty dependent on each party's unilateral determination of the effectiveness of controls. He said that one could possibly understand the Western position if withdrawal were made dependent on a nuclear explosion in violation of the treaty, but not where the treaty could be abrogated by a party even if there had been no illegal explosion.

On 19 March Soviet delegate Tsarapkin approved the

Western suggestion made privately on 16 March to adjourn the talks from 20 March until 13 April. The Soviet delegate himself had earlier suggested the meetings be cut down to one or two per week.

Soviet propaganda has also focused on the American draft duration article. Claiming that, if translated into "plain and simple language," the American formula is "an empty declaration intended to deceive public opinion," Moscow has attempted to portray the escape clause as evidence of a Western desire to "guarantee" the legal right to resume testing at any time. A 15 March commentary relates this "attempt to impose on the Geneva conference the adoption of a false declaration" to American interest in preparing a nuclear war. Soviet propagandists earlier called the introduction of the proposal "another maneuver aimed at preventing at any cost a total unconditional and permanent cessation of tests."

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